African Diaspora at Jacob's Pillow

Performance Highlights

1942
Asadata Dafora & Randolph Sawyer

1947–1950–1987
Pearl Primus

1948–1952–1960
Talley Beatty & Company

1949
Janet Collins

1949–1950–1951–1953–1955–1957–1961–1966–1970–2004
Jean Léon Destiné & Jeanne Ramon (1951 with Jeanne Ramon & Alphonse Cimber) (1955 with Alphonse Cimber)

1953–1954
Lester Horton Dance Theatre
(1954 with Alvin Ailey, Carmen de Lavallade & James Truitte)

1953–1961–1962
Donald McKayle & Company (1961 with Mary Hinkson)
(1962 with Carmen de Lavallade)

1954–1955
Negro Dance Theatre

1954–1956–1958–1960–1962
Geoffrey Holder (1956 & 1960 with Carmen de Lavallade)

1962–2004
Gus Solomons Jr
(1962 with Louis Falco and Kenneth Scott, 2004 with Paradigm).

1959–1961–1963–1988
Alvin Ailey Dance Theatre (1961 with Carmen de Lavallade)

1962–1964–1966–1967–1972–1973–1974–1992–1997–2004
Carmen de Lavallade (1964 with James Truitte with Brother John Sellers)
(1966 Glen Tetley & Company & Mary Hinkson) (1992 with Ulysses Dove)
(2004-Paradigm)

1965
Percival Borde & Company

1967
Babatunde Olatunji & Company

1968–1969–1972
Arthur Hall's Afro-American Dance Ensemble

1970–1973–1990–1997
Dance Theatre of Harlem

1971
Dance Company of the National Center of Afro-American Artists

1972
Morse Donaldson Dance Company

1973
Roni Mahler & Paul Russell

1974–1988–1989
Judith Jamison

1974–1999
Chuck Davis

1975
Joan Miller & the Chamber Arts/Dance Players

1976–1978
Charles Moore & Dances & Drums of Africa

1974–1985–1989–1991–1992–1993–1994–1996–2000–2005
Garth Fagan Dance

1978
Jane Goldberg and Charles Cook with Leslie "Bubba" Gaines

1980–1981
Loremil Machado's Afro-Brazilian Dance Company

1981
Danny Sloan

1981–1982–1983-1985
Clive Thompson Dance Company

1983
Art of Black Dance & Music
Leon Collins
Impulse Dance Company

1984
Bucket Dance Theatre
Blondell Cummings
New Breed with David Bowen
Sara Yarborough

1985
Fred Holland & Ishmael Houston-Jones
Solomons Company/Dance

1985–1988–1998–2007
Bebe Miller & Company

1987
Dance & Music of Africa
Sylvia Ardyn Boone
Reggie Jackson

1988
Sarita Allen
Roots of Brazil
Foday Musa Suso
Brazil Capoeira Dancers

1989
Blondell Cummings
Dr. Pearl Williams Jones
Los Pleneros de la 21

1985–1987–1988
–1991–1993–1995
Ralph Lemon Company

1989–1990–1993–1994–1997–2000–2002–2004
Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane & Company

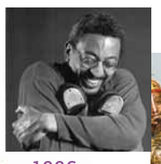
1990–1993
Dayton Contemporary Dance Company

1990
Gary Chryst
Joseph Holmes Dance Theatre
Muntu Dance Theatre of Chicago

1991–1994
Dayton Contemporary Dance Company

1988–1989–1990–1994–1995–1998–2001–2002
Urban Bush Women (2002 Five College Dance Department in work by Pearl Primus)

1991
Los Angeles Contemporary Dance Theatre



1996
Gregory Hines

1996–1998–2005
Jimmy Slyde & Friends
(1998 with Dianne Walker)

1999–2003
Batoto Yetu

1999
M'Zawa Danz
Seventh Principle
The Young Hoofers

1996
Dianne Walker
Cleo Parker Robinson Dance Ensemble

1992–1993–1994–2003
Philadanco

1994–1999–2000–2002–2005
Ronald K. Brown/Evidence

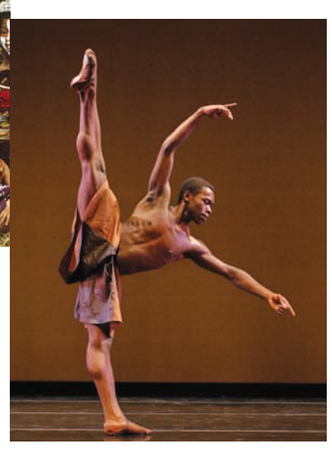
1993
Kim Bears
Les Guirivoires of Rose Marie Guiraud
Sandra Burton

1993–1995
Ballet British Columbia

1993–1997–1998–2007
Joanna Haigood/Zaccho Dance Theatre

1994–1999
Los Muñequitos de Matanzas

1995
Avila/Weeks Dance
Kinswoman Project



2000–2002–2005
Alonzo King's LINES Contemporary Ballet

1996–1997
Bamidele Dancers and Drummers

1997
Jazz Tap/Hip Hop Festival
Muntu Dance Theatre & Curubande
Wanichigu Dance Company of Honduras

1997–1998
Donald Byrd/The Group

1998–2001
nicholasleichterdance

1998–2007
Reggie Wilson/Fist and Heel Performance Group

1998
Dianne McIntyre & Lester Bowie
bopi's black sheep/Kraig Patterson
Pat Hall & Pam Patrick
Aleta Hayes & Group
SANKOFA

2000
Company Jant-Bi
RhythMEK
Mo'gee and Friends / Wyatt Mo'gee Jackson

2000–2003–2005
Rennie Harris Puremovement

2002
Katherine Dunham Tribute

2002–2005
Savion Glover

2002
Francesca Harper
Sala nï Seydou
Harambee Dance Company
Noyam Contemporary African Dance Company
Prophecy Dance Works

2002–2004–2006
Robert Moses' Kin

2001
Limón Dance Company
[premiere by Donald McKayle]
Desmond Richardson
Urban Tap
Reynaldo Gonzalez Fernandez
Kuumba Dance and Drum
Paká

2002–2006
Edgeworks Dance Theater

2003
Battleworks
Vincent Mantsoe
Thaddeus Davis
KR3T (Keep Rising to the Top)
Gelan Lambert, Jr.
Sakoba Dance Theatre

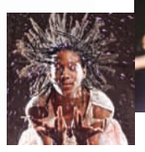
2004–2007
Decadancetheatre

2004–2005
ILLstyle & Peace Productions

2004
This Woman's Work

2005–2006
Washington Reflections

2005
INSPIRIT
FLY Dance Company
Creative Outlet Dance Theatre of Brooklyn



2006
Tania Isaac Dance

2006
BALLETX
New Chamber Ballet
Olive Dance Theatre
Pepatián Presents
SYREN Modern Dance

2007
Magbana Drum & Dance NYC

2007
nathantrice/Rituals
Henri Oguike Dance Company
Rumbatap
Moving Van
Collage dance Collective
Nora Chipaumire and Jimena Paz
Germaul Barnes/Black Bones Project

A Safe Haven

The storied grounds of Jacob's Pillow Dance have a long tradition of providing sanctuary. Originally a family farm in the 1700s, Jacob's Pillow provided safe haven for the enslaved escaping from the south as a station on the Underground Railroad in the mid-1800s. Established as a dance retreat in the 1900s, the Pillow continues today as a haven for generations of dancers from many cultures and heritages all over the world, including the African Diaspora.

Forty years before the Revolutionary War, the town of Becket was settled by a group of farmers, and among these was Stephen Carter. Carter named his homestead Jacob's Pillow after Jacob's Ladder Trail which is now Route 20. Stephen Carter served as a selectman for 37 years, a justice of the peace, and in 1848, the town of Becket's representative to the state legislature and a presidential elector. Members of the Carter family report that it was this upstanding citizen, termed a "violent abolitionist," who made his homestead a station on the Underground Railroad, helping the Canada-bound enslaved. Two of the original barns, reportedly where the escaping enslaved hid, still stand, and currently contain The Pillow Store and the Bakalar Studio. The original farmhouse, now called Hunter House, is used for administrative offices.

After 30 years of ownership by Arthur Morgan, then the President of Antioch College, the property was purchased in 1930 by a friend of a friend— namely Ted Shawn, the modern dance pioneer. Shawn's intent was to create a refuge from city life and a place to create work for his company, The Men Dancers. Barns became studios and performance spaces, and living spaces were added. A renovated barn became the Ted Shawn Theatre which was the first theatre in the country to be built specifically for dance and is distinguished by seven immense timber beams that were hand-hewn by African American local entrepreneur Warren H. Davis. Asadata Dafora, one of the first to bring African dance to the concert stage, performed during the 1942 inaugural season. Dancers of the African Diaspora have been presented and supported in their work at Jacob's Pillow ever since.

In celebration of its 75th Anniversary Season in 2007, Jacob's Pillow engaged Joanna Haigood and the Zaccho Dance Theatre to revive Invisible Wings, a site-specific work that connects the shelter provided by the Underground Railroad and the Pillow's ongoing mission as a sanctuary for dance. Originally commissioned by the Pillow in 1998, this groundbreaking work uses the historic buildings and grounds of Jacob's Pillow to extraordinary effect.

Among the programs that continue the Pillow's role as a safe haven and allow choreographers and scholars to retreat from the vicissitudes of daily life are Creative Development Residencies for artists, commissions of new works, and Research Fellowships, as well as education and audience engagement activities which support artists and audiences alike. Today the Pillow presents an annual renowned festival of dance with companies and audience members from all over the world, and serves a broader mission of supporting creative development of artists, preservation and education, while building audiences for dance through free public programs.

TIMELINE TOP ROW: Asadata Dafora, photo Eileen Darby; Donald McKayle, photo John Lindquist courtesy of Harvard Theatre Collection; Alvin Ailey and Carmen de Lavallade in Dedication to Jose Clemente Orozco, photo John Lindquist courtesy of Harvard Theatre Collection; Chuck Davis, The School at Jacob's Pillow, photo unknown; Garth Fagan Dance, photo Greg Barret; Bebe Miller in Landing/Place, photo Lois Greenfield; Ralph Lemon Company in Persephone, photo Philip Trager; Ronald K. Brown/Evidence in Come Ye, photo Basil Childers BOTTOM ROW: Philadanco, photo Rose Eichenbaum; Gregory Hines, photo Rose Eichenbaum; Batoto Yetu with Julio Leitao, photo Patrick Demarchelier; Prince Credell, LINES Contemporary Ballet in Before the Blues, photo Marty Sohl; Katherine Dunham, photo Rose Eichenbaum; Savion Glover, photo Len Irish; Ebony Williams,Cedar Lake, photo Alexander Berg; Tania Isaac in Water photo unknown; Magdana Drum and Dance photographer Christopher Duggan; SAFE HAVEN PHOTOS: Arthur Morgan Collection, Antioch College; Zaccho Dance Theatre in Invisible Wings, photo Liz Zivic; Warren Davis center with architect Joseph Franz far right and crew, photo unknown; Robert Henry Johnson, Zaccho Dance Theatre in Invisible Wings, photo Liz Zivic; Derby House at Jacob's Pillow, photo Christopher Duggan